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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

ORGANIZED CRIME STRATEGY TOOLKIT FOR DEVELOPING HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit for Developing High-impact Strategies

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PREFACE

Taking forward the fight against transnational organized crime requires robust, evidence-based strategies that build upon international frameworks.

With the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime more than 20 years ago, the international community agreed to unite around global responses to this global challenge, forgoing fragmented actions against organized criminal groups operating across borders, in favour of a concerted and comprehensive approach.

The launch of the review mechanism for the Convention and its Protocols in 2020 has created an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen the implementation of these global instruments and enhance measures against organized crime.

To support States in this endeavour, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has developed the present Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit. This practical publication offers a set of objectives and measures that States are advised to consider in the formulation of integrated strategies against organized crime, in line with the Convention.

The Toolkit envisions a response which prioritizes respect for human rights obligations, incorporates gender perspectives and protects victims and those most vulnerable in our societies. It also places a renewed emphasis on preventive measures, and stresses the importance of strong partnerships.

Ultimately, this Toolkit seeks to foster inclusive, coordinated and effective approaches that leave no one behind, in keeping with the central objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This publication was made possible through collaboration with a large number of partners worldwide, from national institutions to international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. UNODC will continue fostering these essential partnerships and forging new ones within the framework of its Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention: from Theory to Practice.

I thank all stakeholders for their valuable inputs in the formulation of this Toolkit. I am particularly grateful to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for its generous financial contribution and steadfast support for our work, which will also allow UNODC to provide targeted technical assistance for strategy development at the regional and national levels.

Working together, we can build comprehensive and effective responses against transnational organized crime. I hope that this Toolkit will be a valuable resource in support of States' coordinated efforts towards more peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Ghada Waly

Ms. Ghada Fathy Ismail Waly
Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The United Kingdom firmly believes that international cooperation is essential in the effective tackling and prevention of serious and organized crime.

Transnational organized criminal groups pose a threat that transcends all our borders. They have demonstrated their ability to infiltrate societal, political and governance structures globally, often through corruption and illicit finance, creating a vicious cycle that weakens institutions and democratic systems, compromises human rights and entrenches social and economic inequalities.

It also fuels instability, exacerbates conflicts and inflicts the highest economic cost on the lowest-income countries, while threatening progress on women's rights, gender equality, children's education and global health.

The United Kingdom actively works with global partners to target both the underlying drivers and enablers of organized crime, as well as to relentlessly pursue those individuals who engage in it – wherever they may be in the world.

We believe that through a whole of society approach, we can effectively and collectively confront and tackle this threat.

As part of our efforts, we are proud to have funded, supported and collaborated with the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to deliver a new strategy development toolkit designed to help countries develop and enhance their own national serious and organized crime strategies.

Our support for this work underlines the commitment of the United Kingdom to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the launching of the United Nations Review Mechanism into how the Convention is being implemented globally. Our hope is that the strategy toolkit will amplify our collective international efforts in this space by strengthening our ability to share best practice and methodologies.

Our experience shows that when we commit internationally to acting together, the results are better, and we see real change.

I would like to thank all the stakeholders involved in this project for their valuable insights and contributions. I would also like to pay tribute to UNODC for its drive, professionalism and commitment in seeing this project through to fruition.

Transnational organized crime is a global challenge that demands global solutions, so it is vital that we continue working together to confront this varied, evolving and complex threat.

Williams of Trafford

Baroness Williams
Minister of State at the Home Office

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1. Introduction

OVERVIEW: The purpose of this Toolkit is to assist the development and production of national and regional strategies to counter organized crime. As such, it provides guidance on strategic principles relating to preventing and countering organized crime while describing some of the more specific approaches, capabilities and instruments that can be adopted in order to address the problem.

More than two decades since the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was adopted, it is clear that organized crime remains a complex phenomenon that cannot be fought by any State in isolation. Agile and multidimensional in character, organized crime feeds off inequality and marginalization while at the same time adapting to new technologies. Organized criminal groups and their modi operandi evolve rapidly as a result of structural changes at the national and international levels (having, most recently, exploited opportunities created by the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic[1]), are generally attracted to new pockets of political instability and are often quick to exploit new illicit business opportunities and spaces left void of governmental control.

The effects of organized crime are felt all around the globe, eroding governance, infiltrating political processes, fuelling corruption and violence, exploiting vulnerable persons, undermining legitimate markets and posing a growing environmental threat. Global connectivity has provided a conduit for organized criminal groups to operate as highly capable trading networks with efficient supply chains, access to new markets and expertise and a capacity to launder illicit profits on an unprecedented scale. Indeed, most forms of organized crime now involve cross-border activities, linkages or relationships.

It follows that any response to organized crime must therefore equally be inclusive, addressing the many drivers and enablers which, together, form the backbone and machinery of the global criminal economy. It is precisely the acknowledgement of the transnational nature of organized crime and the need for increased international cooperation that led to the passage of the Organized Crime Convention.

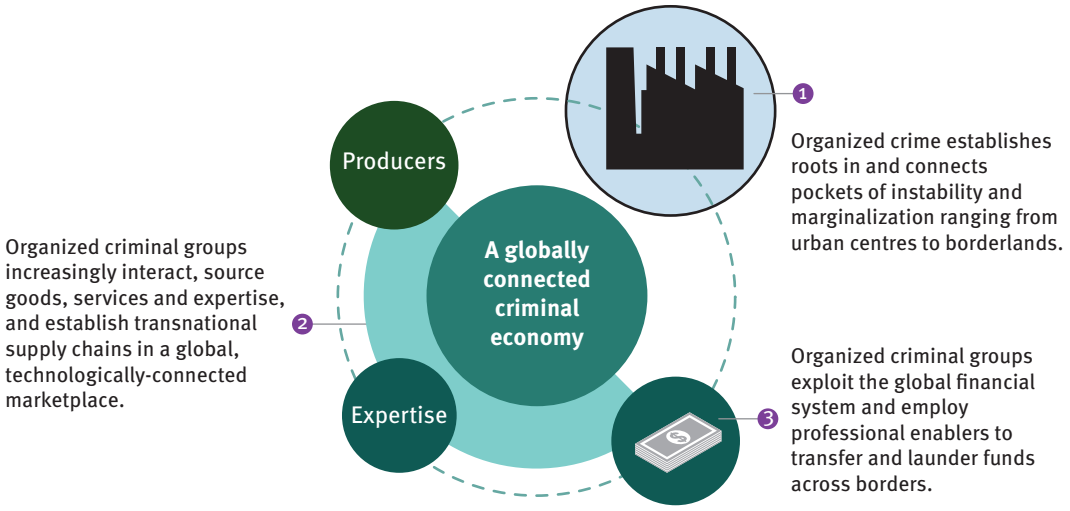
[1] On this topic, see United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "The impact of COVID-19 on organized crime", Research Brief (Vienna, 2020).

To that effect, this Toolkit will:

- Start by briefly highlighting the Convention's enduring utility and the key tools it provides for a coordinated response against organized crime. In turn, these tools can be incorporated into effective strategies to tackle this phenomenon
- Outline overarching principles that can help guide the development of organized crime strategies
- Provide a breakdown of objectives that can be pursued, together with a menu of indicative activities, tactics and capabilities serving each objective
- Offer recommendations relating to the implementation and monitoring of strategies

In doing so, the Toolkit draws on both the existing evidence base relating to different approaches to countering organized crime and on the analysis of existing national strategies. In order to prepare the Toolkit, more than 70 strategies were examined, aimed at combating organized crime as a whole, addressing specific crime types that are often associated with it (such as human trafficking, cybercrime, corruption and money-laundering) and/or employing measures such as asset confiscation that are particularly relevant in the fight against the problem. A number of these strategies are also regional in nature.[2]

Figure 1. Organized crime as a transnational system


Producers
A globally connected criminal economy
Expertise
1
Organized crime establishes roots in and connects pockets of instability and marginalization ranging from urban centres to borderlands.
2
Organized criminal groups increasingly interact, source goods, services and expertise, and establish transnational supply chains in a global, technologically-connected marketplace.
3
Organized criminal groups exploit the global financial system and employ professional enablers to transfer and launder funds across borders.

Note: Organized criminal groups operate as highly capable, cross-border trading networks with access to new markets and expertise.

[2] Such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime or the Binational Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Trafficking in Wild Fauna and Flora in the Colombia-Ecuador Border Integration Zone.

2. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Collective action against transnational organized crime requires effective cooperation mechanisms at both the national and international levels. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime, provides many of these mechanisms which, in turn, can be built into national strategies, as will be explained in this Toolkit. It is therefore important to briefly highlight from the outset the role of the Convention, as well as some of its key provisions and tools to facilitate international cooperation and prevent and combat transnational organized crime more effectively.

Adopted in 2000, at a time of growing concern about transnational organized crime, the Organized Crime Convention marked a significant milestone in the global response to the problem. It was intended to encourage States that do not have provisions against organized crime to adopt relevant countermeasures and establish the necessary legislative frameworks. It also sought to eliminate safe havens for organized crime, ensuring a more efficient and effective global effort to prevent and combat the phenomenon.

While a detailed examination of the Convention is beyond the scope of the present publication, it is important to highlight the continued relevance and utility of the Convention, which recognizes the importance of specific criminal offences and the role of law enforcement, prosecution and adjudication in combating organized crime. It does so by setting out four specific offences that States parties are required to criminalize in their domestic laws: participation in an organized criminal group (article 5), which may be criminalized either on the basis of a conspiracy-style offence or as an offence based on criminal association, or both; money-laundering (article 6); corruption (article 8); and obstruction of justice (article 23).

Beyond the prevention, investigation and prosecution of these four offences, the scope of the application of the Convention extends to all "serious crimes", defined in article 2, paragraph (b), to mean crimes for which the maximum penalty is at least four years of deprivation of liberty or a more serious penalty. The introduction of the "serious crimes" formula at the core of the Convention is integral to the adaptability and flexibility of this legally binding international instrument as it allows

Article 1 of the Convention.
Statement of purpose

"The purpose of this Convention is to promote cooperation to prevent and combat transnational organized crime more effectively."

States parties to cooperate on the basis of the Convention also in tackling new and emerging forms of crime.[3]

Of particular relevance is the Convention's focus on promoting international cooperation through measures such as extradition (article 16), mutual legal assistance (article 18), joint investigations (article 19), law enforcement cooperation (article 27), transfer of sentenced persons (article 17) and the transfer of criminal proceedings (article 21). The Convention also places a strong emphasis on prevention (article 31), encouraging countries to take appropriate measures to, among other things, shield their legal markets from infiltration, reintegrate persons convicted of organized crime-related offences, increase public awareness of the threat, (re)evaluate their relevant legal instruments and administrative practices in order to detect their vulnerabilities to misuse by organized criminal groups, and safeguard the integrity of public and private entities.

Despite close to universal adherence to the Organized Crime Convention, some States have yet to ratify or accede to the Convention. It is also clear that ratification or accession in itself is not sufficient to translate the Convention into practice. In this context, the review process of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and its supplementary Protocols[4] launched at the end of 2020 (Conference of the Parties resolution 10/1[5]) offers additional opportunities for States to share knowledge and experience, discuss common issues and identify areas for cooperation. In its resolution 10/4,[6] adopted the same year, the Conference requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) "to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to Member States, upon request, to support their capacity to prevent and combat transnational organized crime, including through [...] the provision of assistance in the development of national strategies to prevent and fight" this phenomenon.

The production of this Toolkit and the work that will be carried out by UNODC to support States in the development and strengthening of their strategic frameworks against organized crime stems from this specific request, while building on the provisions of the Convention highlighted above. Taken together, the Convention, relevant Conference resolutions and the wider literature on organized crime also demonstrate the need for nuanced, multisectoral responses to the problem. These, it is increasingly recognized, need to go beyond treating the phenomenon purely as a matter of national security by also promoting sustainable development, respecting human rights obligations, incorporating gender considerations and protecting victims. This means providing people and communities with dignified economic, social and political opportunities, while recognizing that individual needs and vulnerabilities may differ. Understanding these needs and vulnerabilities is key to formulating tailored, human rights-compliant responses that truly leave no one behind.[7]

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[3] As long as these crimes meet the threshold of "seriousness" as defined in article 2, paragraph b, are transnational in nature and involve an organized criminal group. The scope of application of the Convention is defined in article 3.

[4] The Convention is supplemented by three Protocols, which target specific manifestations of organized crime: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

[5] Resolution 10/1 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime entitled "Launch of the review process of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto".

[6] Resolution 10/4 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime entitled "Celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and promoting its effective implementation".

[7] To support these efforts, UNODC has developed two issue papers, on integrating gender considerations, and on human rights considerations, in the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention.

3. Role of strategies and toolkits

The overall purpose of a strategy is to align ways (activities) and capabilities (means) systematically to achieve clearly defined aims (ends) – in this case that of countering transnational organized crime. Strategies are therefore useful tools in that they offer a mechanism through which to bring together multiple actors from all across society and disparate capabilities in pursuit of common visions and goals. They also constitute a strong signal of political intent both nationally and internationally, justifying increased action and the mobilization of effort and resources.

By bringing together different sectors and nations, national and regional strategies can effectively help to build international networks of resilience that can defend against the problem at both the local and global levels. Strategies can also provide the basis for higher-impact responses that can leverage a variety of tools, tactics and techniques to achieve defined objectives. These, when applied simultaneously against organized crime vulnerabilities, can add up to more than the sum of their individual parts.

In order to do this, strategies need to offer a clear logic that starts by describing the overall ends and work backwards, clarifying the change that is required by way of objectives and supporting measures, activities, capabilities and tactics. These steps are also important in order to guide the allocation of resources, including funds. While the overarching goal of the strategies described in this Toolkit is to combat organized crime, the shape of the problem and therefore, of the response, will vary depending on the context.

Figure 2. Components of strategies

Principles: the overarching domains of change that together constitute a strategic vision
Supporting **objectives** focused on delivering clearly defined outcomes
Activities, capabilities and tactics required to deliver objectives (outputs and inputs)

Toolkits can assist the development of such strategies by providing overarching principles drawn from the evidence base as well as a menu of more granular objectives, tactics and capabilities that can be tailored to those different contexts. In order to be effective, a toolkit therefore needs to be sufficiently prescriptive so as to provide a guiding framework for strategy-making, while at the same time offering flexibility in the selection and application of specific activities and instruments. In doing so, it should allow for various combinations of activities to be adopted to meet individual needs. Strategy toolkits can also provide an indication of the ways in which to measure effect and impact when devising strategies. They can achieve this by providing a broad range of monitoring and evaluation criteria that, once again, can be tailored to individual contexts.

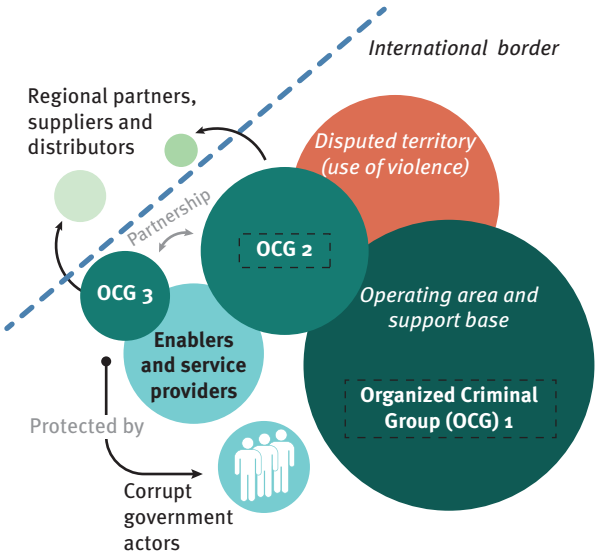
The study of organized crime and, more specifically, what constitutes an effective response to the phenomenon continues to be a matter of significant debate. Similarly, existing strategies vary significantly in terms of emphasis, detail and scope – a product of different policy priorities, legal frameworks, resources and cultural norms. Such differences are in fact often necessary as the character of the problem will also vary between countries and regions. Together, and when combined with the wider investigation of the literature, these do nevertheless point to overarching trends, patterns and best practices that can act as building blocks for a toolkit such as this one.

This means that tailored strategies can effectively be devised regardless of the level of available resources. Different approaches and strategies applied within varying contexts, when combined with robust evaluation processes and information exchange, can also help to further build the evidence base on the efficacy of different interventions.

4. Analysis and strategy-making

Analysis provides the foundation and evidence base for strategies. When effectively conducted, it can identify many of the characteristics of organized crime as well as its vulnerabilities, paving the way for the development of objectives that are focused on the more serious aspects of the problem.

Figure 3. Mapping organized crime: an example



Note: A generic example demonstrating how organized crime markets as well as operating locations, spheres of influence and relationships of organized crime groups can be mapped via the analytical process.

Because of the complexity and multifaceted nature of organized crime, it is recommended that analysis should be either conducted jointly, by various experts, or at least draw on as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. These may include academics, researchers, criminal justice practitioners from the various relevant departments and agencies (such as the police, customs and tax authorities, as well as those departments or agencies with mandates related to different aspects of organized crime), civil society, private sector representatives and think tanks, to name only a few. Conducting joint analytical processes and involving the many sectors that are affected by the problem will increase buy-in for strategies and provide a stronger basis for a subsequent integrated, multi-stakeholder response.

The strategic analysis of organized crime needs to cover at least three dimensions.

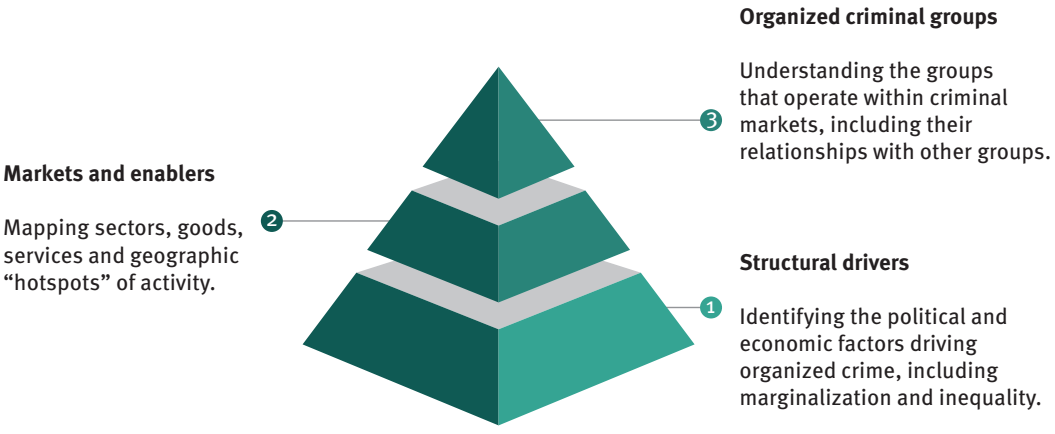
Firstly, it should seek to understand the structural and environmental drivers of organized crime – factors that allow it to establish roots and gain support within society. These include instability, economic

inequality, political or social exclusion, a lack of access to key services, (endemic) corruption and grievance narratives. Such an approach can also help to identify sources of legitimacy for organized crime as well as the role of criminal actors and interests in shoring up the existing political system.

Secondly, analytical products need to map organized crime markets, more specifically, the different sectors, goods, services, enablers and infrastructures that together constitute criminal economies. Examples of sectors might include the financial sector, including the different mechanisms used to transfer funds; the property sector, which may provide a conduit for the acquisition of assets as well as for money-laundering; and transport services, which are critical in the movement of illicit goods. Geographical hotspots such as borderlands, urban centres and transhipment points should also ideally be identified at this stage.

Thirdly, the analysis should cover organized criminal groups involved in organized crime, including their structure, activities and cooperative and competitive relationships, including with other organized criminal groups located both inside and outside of the country (this latter activity may also require international cooperation). Certain approaches such as social network maps of organizations can help to better understand the linkages between different organizations and key enablers.

Figure 4. Components of effective analysis


Organized criminal groups
Understanding the groups that operate within criminal markets, including their relationships with other groups.
3
Markets and enablers
Mapping sectors, goods, services and geographic "hotspots" of activity.
2
Structural drivers
Identifying the political and economic factors driving organized crime, including marginalization and inequality.
1

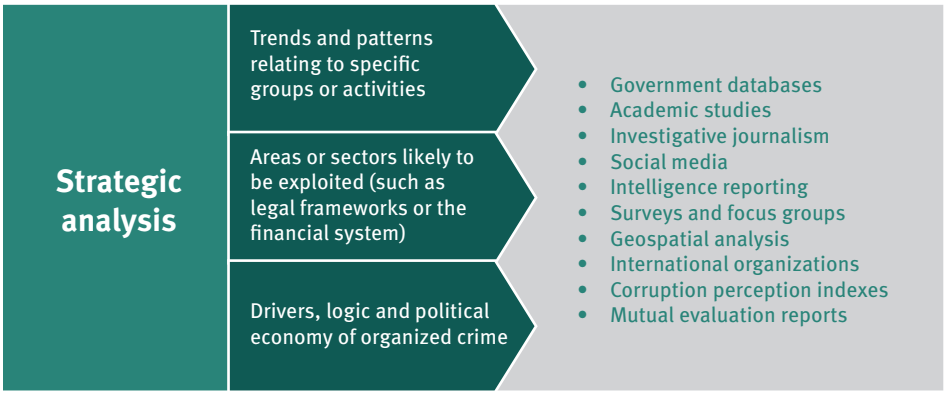
Analysis can help to ensure that strategies are realistic both in scope and ambition.

Together, these different components can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the political economy of organized crime, as well as help to understand the various risks and trade-offs associated with the different interventions and policies contained in strategies. For example, in some contexts, organized crime may be perceived as a source of local stability, providing services and livelihoods to marginalized communities. In others, the removal of organized criminal groups can create power vacuums, triggering violence and turf wars between such groups. In that regard, approaches that are overly focused on security concerns can exacerbate instability and grievances, particularly if those approaches fail to respect human rights. Identifying these risks may therefore help to predict second-order effects, thus guarding against unintended consequences and further harm. This approach, which is also sometimes described as "crime sensitivity", also requires guarding against the risk that development efforts, including trade, technology,

infrastructure and post-pandemic economic recovery investments, inadvertently provide a platform for organized crime to grow and thrive.[8]

The early, analytical phase of strategy-making may also involve a stocktake and/or audit of existing measures and capabilities used to combat organized crime. Examining these alongside an assessment of the problem by way of a gap analysis[9] can help to identify capability or resource deficiencies, which can subsequently be addressed through the strategy-making process. It can also help to ensure that strategies are realistic and guided by existing resources (even if new capabilities may subsequently be acquired or provided by donors as part of the strategy development process).

Figure 5. Analysis and assessment: products and sources


Strategic analysis
Trends and patterns relating to specific groups or activities
Areas or sectors likely to be exploited (such as legal frameworks or the financial system)
Drivers, logic and political economy of organized crime
Government databases
Academic studies
Investigative journalism
Social media
Intelligence reporting
Surveys and focus groups
Geospatial analysis
International organizations
Corruption perception indexes
Mutual evaluation reports

Note: A range of different sources can be combined when conducting strategic analysis of organized crime.

Case study 1. Technologically enabled approaches to mapping and reporting crime in Kenya

It can be challenging for relevant authorities to access, coordinate and share existing national crime data that are spread across multiple sources. In Kenya, the National Crime Research Centre (NCRC) plays an important role in this sense, as it collects national crime-related data and facilitates access and use of those data among relevant national authorities. Harnessing the widespread access to mobile phones, NCRC launched in 2017 a crime-reporting app allowing Kenyan citizens to anonymously report crimes online. The app has been widely used in the country, allowing NCRC and other relevant national authorities to profile crimes as well as to collect important crime-related information at the national level. The research and data collection undertaken by NCRC also enables the elaboration of national trend analyses on new and future organized crime challenges..

[8] The implication here may be that due diligence processes (including with respect to public procurement, large contracts and post-crisis/conflict recovery) are required in order to shield the economy from organized crime infiltration.

[9] A gap analysis would in this case consist of developing a baseline of existing capabilities and testing the extent to which these are sufficient to meet strategic ambitions.

5. Strategic principles

Organized crime comes in many forms and manifests itself at multiple levels. It follows that, similarly, any response needs to be nuanced and multisectoral in nature. An effective strategy needs, first and foremost, to be clear about its overall aim (or "ends"), define the change that is desired with respect to organized crime and build backwards from there – an approach sometimes referred to as a "theory of success".

While every country and region is unique, the analysis of strategies and responses to organized crime around the world points to four overarching principles that are broad enough to be applied to most contexts. These are useful as they act as broad pillars and conceptual starting points under which different objectives and capabilities can be situated. These principles are as follows.

PREVENT organized crime from (re)infiltrating communities, the economy and political institutions. This principle seeks to build resilience to organized crime, denying it the ability to penetrate society.

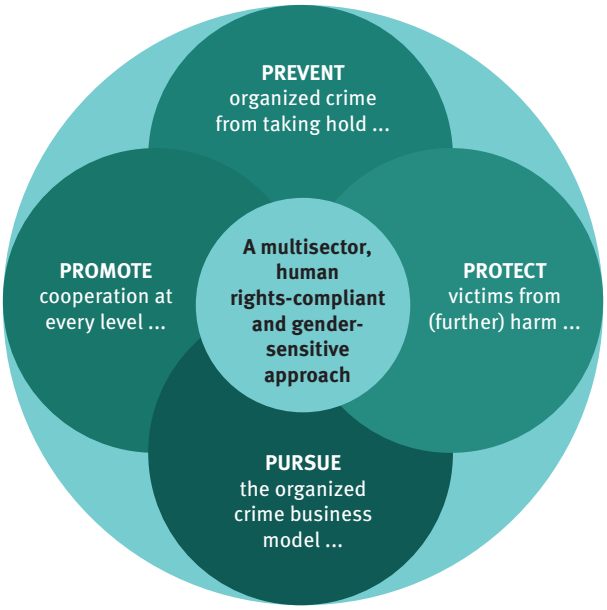
PURSUE organized criminal groups and their illicit gains thereby increasing their operational costs and risks. This principle is aimed at degrading and disrupting the organized crime economy.

PROTECT vulnerable persons and victims from (further) harm. This principle recognizes the damage and harm that organized crime inflicts on individuals by emphasizing a victim-centred approach that incorporates human-rights and gender considerations.

PROMOTE partnerships and cooperation at all levels, including across international borders – a whole-of-society approach. This principle, which lies at very heart of the Organized Crime Convention, highlights the importance of partnerships at the local, national and international levels, working across the government, non-governmental and private sectors.

Again, while these principles are relatively universal, their application and the balance of effort and resources between them will need to be adapted depending on the characteristics of the problem in any given country or region. This will need to be achieved through the development of more granular objectives.

Figure 6. Four overarching strategic principles: the "four Ps"



These principles, moreover, are, of course, fluid and overlapping. For example, the coordination and collaboration highlighted in the principle of PROMOTE and the emphasis on human rights and gender considerations outlined in in the principle of PROTECT – including placing the needs of individuals at the heart of interventions – are fundamentally cross-cutting in nature and should therefore be reflected across all strategy objectives.

Translating principles into clearly defined objectives

The development of objectives is a critical component of any strategy. Objectives are the means used to clarify the more detailed goals and desired effects that are sought within any given context, as well as any associated requirement.

As well as being drawn from the analysis of the problem, objectives should, wherever possible, be developed using a variant of the SMART principle,[10] by ensuring that these are:

- *Specific* – clearly describing the desired impact or result.
- *Measurable* over time so that results can be monitored, and lessons learned.
- *Accepted* – organized crime objectives will require buy-in from relevant stakeholders.
- *Realistic* – reflecting political and social factors, recognizing available resources and acknowledging the scale of the problem in any given context.
- *Time-bound* – so that clear milestones can be formulated as part of the objectives-setting process.

[10] Slight variations of this principle exist although the following are assessed to be the most relevant to the formulation of counter-organized crime objectives.

Developing SMART objectives will require testing, refinement and consultation during the strategy development and drafting process to ensure that these can actually be implemented in the real world. One best practice is that of establishing a small "challenge team", whose role is to identify potential issues with objectives and/or the ways in which organized criminal groups might respond to the approaches and activities contained under those same objectives.

The development of these objectives can also benefit from listing the core assumptions underpinning the objectives, such as the fact that organized criminal groups are rational, profit-seeking actors that decide to commit crimes based on a complex calculation of risks and benefits, which strategies need to be able to capture and address. Making such a list of assumptions can then offer a means by which to test these, including through additional research and analysis and/or identify accompanying objectives. For example, it may be that research demonstrates that certain risks alone – for instance, punitive measures such as incarceration and/or drug seizures – do not act as a deterrent in a particular context as individuals involved in organized crime do not have alternative economic opportunities or social pathways and/or have accounted for seizures as part of their business costs. Here, one of the implications might be that developing alternative economic opportunities should be an additional or accompanying objective sitting alongside measures targeting the security threats posed by organized criminal groups (one that would likely fit under the PREVENT principle).

Establishing a "challenge team" during the drafting process can help to test existing assumptions and institutional biases.

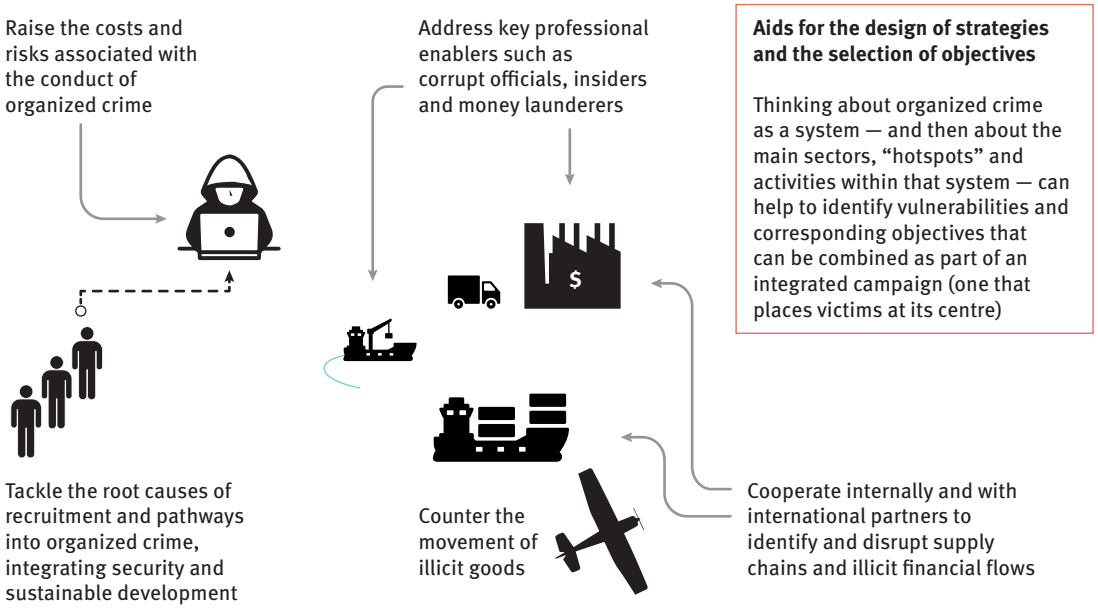
In order to be specific and measurable, objectives should also build towards clearly defined outcomes (or, more specifically, the desired strategic results in any given context). These outcomes essentially constitute a more detailed description or vision of what the four overarching principles look like in the specific, national context in which the strategy is produced. For example, in the case of the principle of PREVENT (and as will be seen in the next section), an outcome statement seeking to address the root causes of organized crime might be as follows:

> Local grievances, pockets of instability and "breeding grounds" are addressed, and opportunities for organized crime to take hold are limited or closed, challenging the authority and legitimacy narratives of organized criminal groups.

Once again, developing such outcome statements can provide a means to test whether such change can realistically be achieved, as well as the likely timescales required to achieve it. These can also provide the basis for widespread consultation with relevant stakeholders (in this case, including local community actors and civil society).

As a general rule, strategies to prevent and combat organized crime and the outcomes contained within them will need to reflect a long-term view and accept the need for strategic patience. However, tightly defined objectives and clear outcomes are critical to ensuring that these can add up to the type of systemic change that is required to address the organized crime phenomenon. It follows that objectives should also work *together as an integrated and systematic response* by addressing the different vulnerabilities identified during the analysis phase that make up the various components and enablers of the organized crime system.

Figure 7. Integrated responses aimed at systemic change


Raise the costs and risks associated with the conduct of organized crime
Address key professional enablers such as corrupt officials, insiders and money launderers
Aids for the design of strategies and the selection of objectives
Thinking about organized crime as a system — and then about the main sectors, "hotspots" and activities within that system — can help to identify vulnerabilities and corresponding objectives that can be combined as part of an integrated campaign (one that places victims at its centre)
$
Tackle the root causes of recruitment and pathways into organized crime, integrating security and sustainable development
Counter the movement of illicit goods
Cooperate internally and with international partners to identify and disrupt supply chains and illicit financial flows

Finally, as already highlighted, strategies will inevitably vary in ambition, given both the extent of the problem within the country or region and the available resources. For this reason, a good strategy is not necessarily one that does everything but, rather, one that strives to achieve realistic outcomes (the "R" element in the SMART formula) in any given context and that is able to mobilize and maximize the use of available resources (even when they are relatively limited).

6. Objectives and associated activities and capabilities

PREVENT objectives

Prevention, it is often said, is better than cure. In the case of organized crime strategies, prevention consists of making it harder for criminal groups to take hold within societies, recruit new members, gain support, co-opt political institutions, infiltrate the economy and, ultimately, challenge the authority of the State. This, correspondingly, requires increasing social, economic and political resilience to organized crime, particularly within vulnerable communities, closing pathways to recruitment into criminality and averting the infiltration of the licit sector and economy.

Translating the principle of prevention into objectives should be guided by a clear understanding of the ways in which organized crime takes hold within any given context – something that should be clarified through the process of conducting strategic analysis.

Figure 8. Effective organized crime prevention: some key components

Thwarting the co-option of political institutions
Blocking attempts to infiltrate the licit economy
Challenging organized crime narratives
Providing local services and employment opportunities
Identifying pockets of marginalization
Addressing local drivers of recruitment
Organized crime claims of legitimacy and authority undermined

High-level objectives can then be formulated and be linked to corresponding outcomes that clarify desired results and effects, while following the SMART principle. For example, the following objectives and corresponding outcomes can be applied in most contexts (although to varying degrees, depending on the extent of organized crime penetration within society).

Objectives

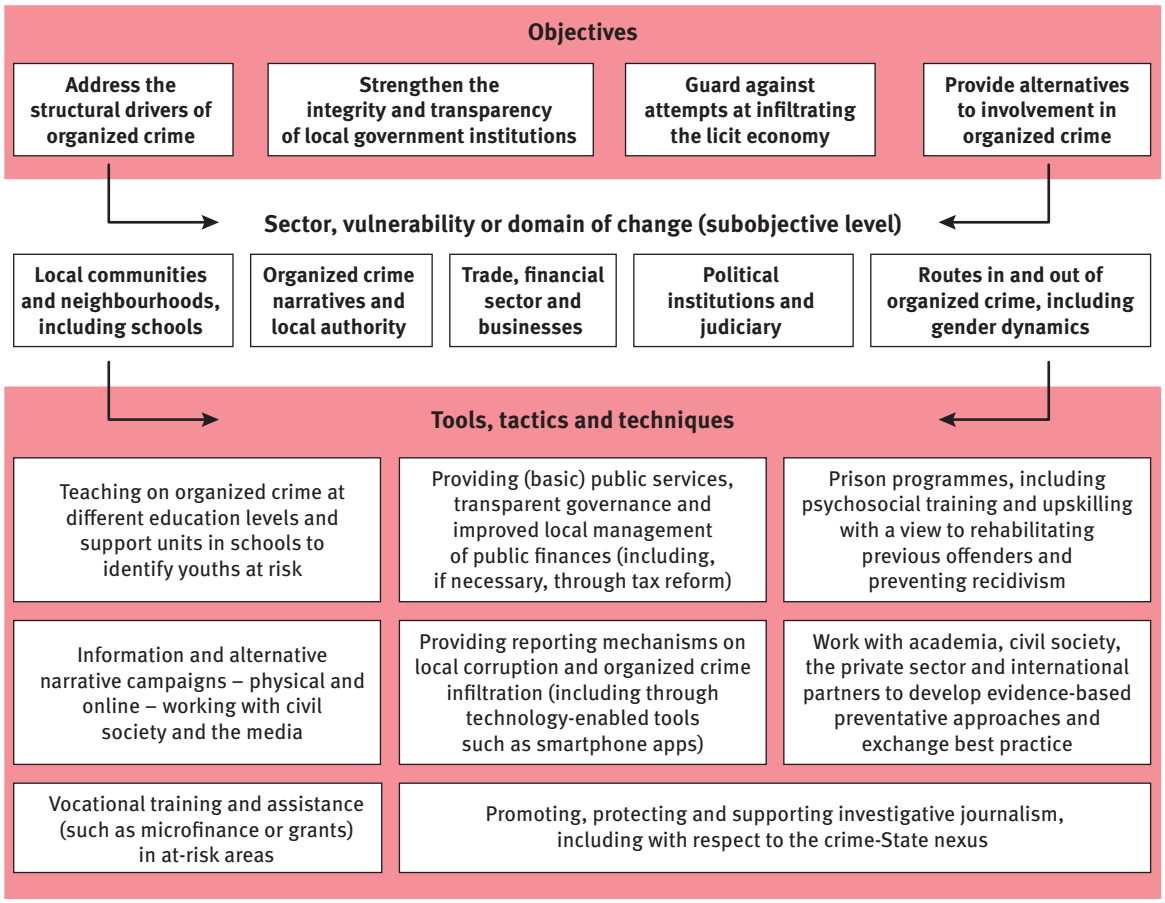
1. Address local drivers of recruitment into organized crime, including social and political exclusion, economic inequality and unemployment.
2. Strengthen the integrity and resilience of local political institutions and economies to organized crime infiltration.
3. Challenge the narratives and perceptions of organized criminal groups, including those depicting them as legitimate actors.
4. Provide "ways out" for organized crime members, including through rehabilitation and reintegration.

Desired outcome
(essentially the vision of success)

Local grievances, pockets of instability and "breeding grounds" are addressed and opportunities for organized crime to take hold are limited or closed, challenging the authority and legitimacy narratives of organized criminal groups.

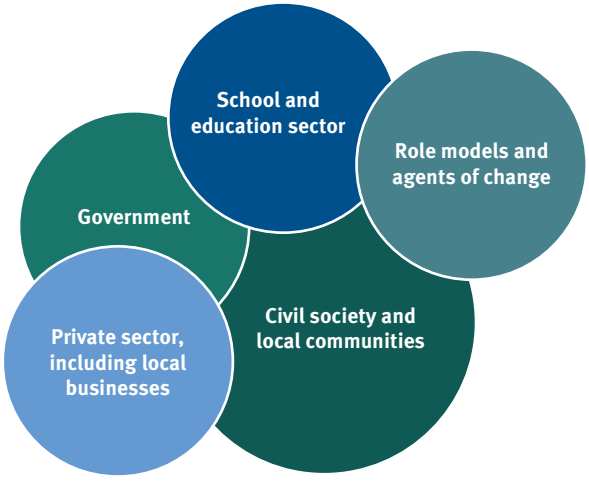
Objectives can subsequently be refined through the process of clarifying the specific domains or areas that the strategy will address (in other words, subobjectives). These can in turn provide a clearer indication of the type of activities that will be conducted and the capabilities that will be required. Such an approach for aligning objectives, subobjectives and more granular activities/capabilities is outlined below.

Figure 9. Preventing organized crime: objectives, subobjectives and activities/capabilities


Objectives
Address the structural drivers of organized crime
Strengthen the integrity and transparency of local government institutions
Guard against attempts at infiltrating the licit economy
Provide alternatives to involvement in organized crime
Sector, vulnerability or domain of change (subobjective level)
Local communities and neighbourhoods, including schools
Organized crime narratives and local authority
Trade, financial sector and businesses
Political institutions and judiciary
Routes in and out of organized crime, including gender dynamics
Tools, tactics and techniques
Teaching on organized crime at different education levels and support units in schools to identify youths at risk
Providing (basic) public services, transparent governance and improved local management of public finances (including, if necessary, through tax reform)
Prison programmes, including psychosocial training and upskilling with a view to rehabilitating previous offenders and preventing recidivism
Information and alternative narrative campaigns – physical and online – working with civil society and the media
Providing reporting mechanisms on local corruption and organized crime infiltration (including through technology-enabled tools such as smartphone apps)
Work with academia, civil society, the private sector and international partners to develop evidence-based preventative approaches and exchange best practice
Vocational training and assistance (such as microfinance or grants) in at-risk areas
Promoting, protecting and supporting investigative journalism, including with respect to the crime-State nexus

Clearly, these objectives and activities will need to be designed and delivered by a wide consortium of stakeholders including government, civil society, the private sector (including local businesses) and the education sector – a theme that will be covered in more detail under the PROMOTE pillar.

Figure 10. Developing prevention partnerships


School and education sector
Role models and agents of change
Government
Civil society and local communities
Private sector, including local businesses

Case study 2. 'Prevention first' in New Zealand

"Prevention first" is one of the main principles of the New Zealand transnational organized crime strategy for the period 2020–2025, with an emphasis on proactive management of offshore risks and raising awareness of organized crime among government, the private sector and the general public. The strategy is complemented by the "Resilience to Organized Crime in Communities" programme, which is a prevention-oriented, community-led approach to addressing the harms and social drivers of organized crime. Together, these initiatives form an end-to-end approach to addressing the full supply-demand spectrum of organized crime, with a focus on prevention at every stage.

Case study 3. The Global Initiative's Resilience Fund

In recognition of the need for multi-stakeholder strategic approaches to organized crime, in 2019, the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime created the Resilience Fund aimed at identifying and selecting civil society and grassroots actors, including activists, community resilience groups and journalists. Support is then provided by the Fund to those actors to enhance local initiatives and create a global network of resilience against organized crime, connecting initiatives in different geographical locations. The Fund not only bolsters civil society's capacity to respond to organized crime but also helps them to play their part in developing whole-of-society approaches to combat the phenomenon.

Case study 4. Mexico's approach to changing societal norms

One of the main objectives of Mexico's National Public Security Strategy is the ethical regeneration of society through an emphasis on transparency, human rights and inclusion, increasing awareness of the impact of crime, advocating for alternative societal attitudes and improving life conditions of all citizens.

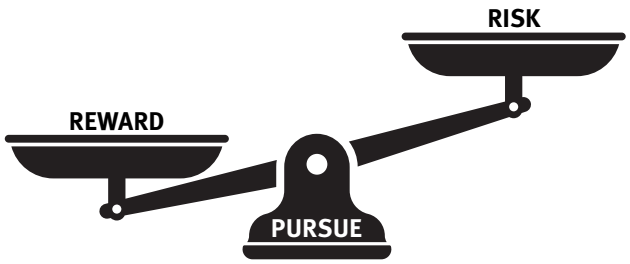
PURSUE objectives

The logic of pursuing organized criminal groups is typically aimed at disrupting their business model (or the economic system comprising criminal actors as well as supply and value chains), in addition to increasing the operating costs and risk involved.[11] This approach broadly follows the principle of deterrence, where risks are increased to the extent that they outweigh the rewards associated with involvement in organized crime.[12]

[11] Police and law enforcement in general play a key role in achieving the PURSUE objectives highlighted in this section. In this context, it is paramount that enforcement action is subject to an effective system of accountability and oversight. The United Nations has produced a number of publications providing guidance to Member States on this topic, among them, the UNODC *Handbook on Police Accountability, Oversight and Integrity and the Training Manual on Policing Urban Space.*

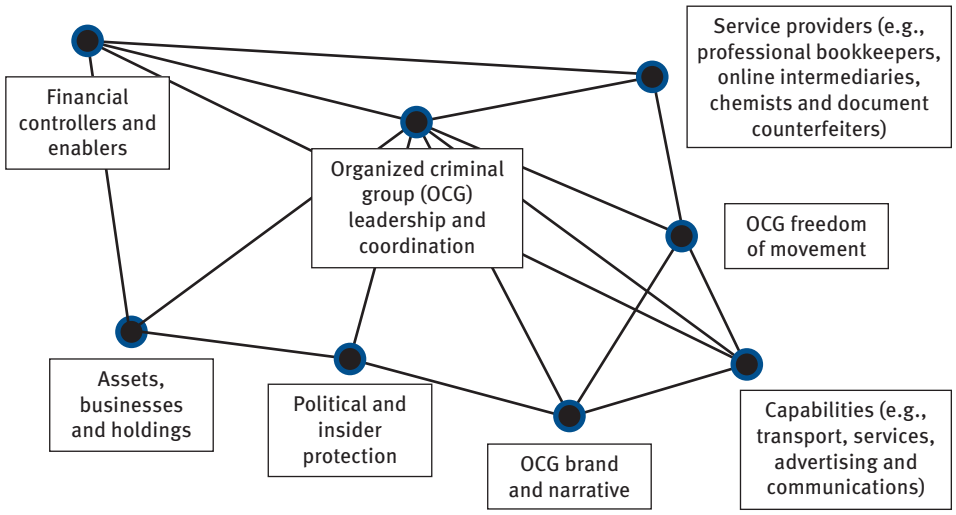
[12] This could also be described as shifting the balance of incentives associated with involvement in organized crime.

The aim of increasing costs and risks to organized crime actors once again requires mapping the sectors, systems and activities required to run a successful organized crime enterprise and then to apply corresponding levers of disruption or targeted pressure to these vulnerable points, with a view to delivering a strategic effect.



As in the case of prevention, this approach can then provide the basis for developing high-level objectives as well as the corresponding desired outcomes. In turn, the following objectives and corresponding outcomes can be applied in most contexts.

Figure 11. Pressure points


Financial controllers and enablers
Service providers (e.g., professional bookkeepers, online intermediaries, chemists and document counterfeiters)
Organized criminal group (OCG) leadership and coordination
OCG freedom of movement
Assets, businesses and holdings
Political and insider protection
OCG brand and narrative
Capabilities (e.g., transport, services, advertising and communications)

Note: Strategic effect is maximized when pressure is applied concurrently across the business network "nervous system".

Objectives
(the three "D"s of PURSUE)

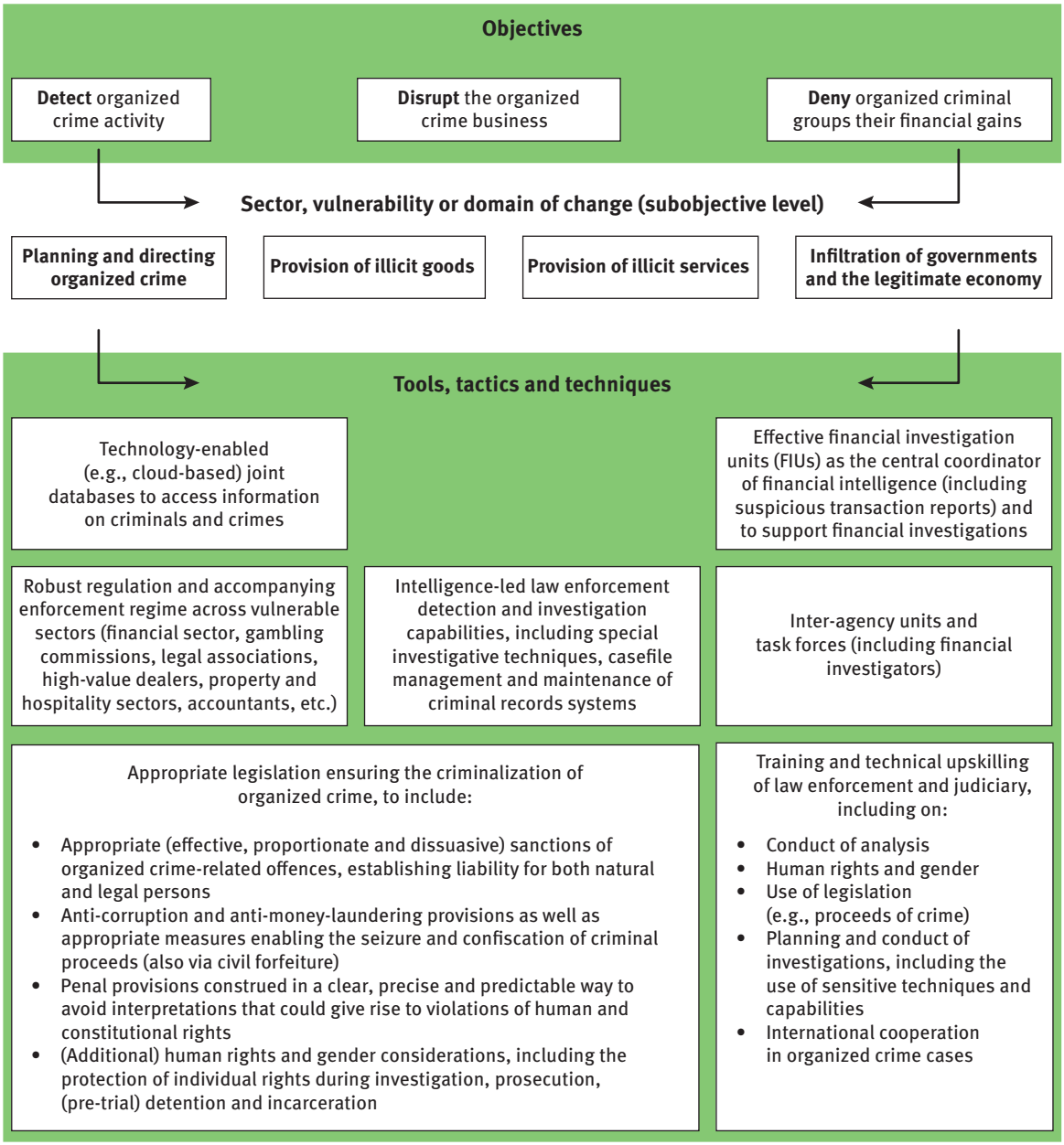
1. Detect organized crime activity.
2. Disrupt and increase risk within the organized crime business model.
3. Deny organized criminals their financial gains.

Desired outcome

Criminals unable to build effective businesses, conduct illicit trade, acquire wealth and transfer their criminal proceeds and are as a result deterred from (further) involvement in organized crime.

Having developed a logic describing objectives and outcomes, it is then possible to outline corresponding activities, tactics, tools and techniques, as described below. To ensure greater clarity, these can be mapped against the main domains of change and/or vulnerabilities that they seek to address. For example, they can be applied to key functions within the organized crime business model such as the movement of illicit goods and funds, provision of illicit services, infiltration of governments and the legitimate economy and the organization and directing of these activities (here, organized criminal group leaders can play an important role). Again however, these will need to be refined to meet the needs and realities of different contexts.

Figure 12. Pursuing organized criminal groups and their activities: objectives, subobjectives and activities/capabilities


Objectives
Detect organized crime activity
Disrupt the organized crime business
Deny organized criminal groups their financial gains
Sector, vulnerability or domain of change (subobjective level)
Planning and directing organized crime
Provision of illicit goods
Provision of illicit services
Infiltration of governments and the legitimate economy
Tools, tactics and techniques
Technology-enabled (e.g., cloud-based) joint databases to access information on criminals and crimes
Effective financial investigation units (FIUs) as the central coordinator of financial intelligence (including suspicious transaction reports) and to support financial investigations
Robust regulation and accompanying enforcement regime across vulnerable sectors (financial sector, gambling commissions, legal associations, high-value dealers, property and hospitality sectors, accountants, etc.)
Intelligence-led law enforcement detection and investigation capabilities, including special investigative techniques, casefile management and maintenance of criminal records systems
Inter-agency units and task forces (including financial investigators)
Appropriate legislation ensuring the criminalization of organized crime, to include:
• Appropriate (effective, proportionate and dissuasive) sanctions of organized crime-related offences, establishing liability for both natural and legal persons
• Anti-corruption and anti-money-laundering provisions as well as appropriate measures enabling the seizure and confiscation of criminal proceeds (also via civil forfeiture)
• Penal provisions construed in a clear, precise and predictable way to avoid interpretations that could give rise to violations of human and constitutional rights
• (Additional) human rights and gender considerations, including the protection of individual rights during investigation, prosecution, (pre-trial) detention and incarceration
Training and technical upskilling of law enforcement and judiciary, including on:
• Conduct of analysis
• Human rights and gender
• Use of legislation (e.g., proceeds of crime)
• Planning and conduct of investigations, including the use of sensitive techniques and capabilities
• International cooperation in organized crime cases

Recognizing risks and assumptions. PURSUE activities perhaps require the greatest understanding of potential risks and underlining assumptions associated with objectives. For example, organized criminal groups may factor disruption or seizures into their business costs or pass these on to their customers. The disruption of organized crime in one locality can also create displacement, aggravating the situation in other areas (the so-called "balloon effect").[13] These risks will therefore need to be carefully weighed at the planning stage.

Case study 5. The approach of the United Kingdom to disrupting organized criminal groups

The Serious and Organized Crime Strategy of the United Kingdom sets out a holistic approach, which includes targeted disruption focused on the highest harm, the most dangerous offenders and criminal networks by preventing them from accessing and acquiring money, assets and infrastructure. The strategy also announced new and innovative capabilities, such as an international Serious and Organized Crime Network (SOCNet) aimed at enhancing diplomatic engagement and the coordination of cross-departmental activities overseas.

PROTECT objectives

Victim-centric PROTECT objectives recognize the harmful impact that organized crime has on vulnerable individuals across societies. These therefore seek to ensure that such persons are not exploited or harmed by organized criminal groups and/or criminal economies by alerting them to risks, providing them with the necessary resources to resist or escape harm and, when necessary, rescuing them from abusive or dangerous situations. Protection objectives also apply to witnesses, whistle-blowers and informants, all of whom play an important role in tackling organized crime.

There are many different types of harms caused by organized crime. These can be physical, such as in the case of victims of human trafficking, illegal waste disposal, crimes in the fisheries sectors and trafficking in falsified medical products which can cause serious harm to the health, well-being and livelihoods of individuals and sometimes of entire communities. They can also be psychological, as a result of physical abuse or by witnessing or living in contexts where organized crime has taken hold, possibly with high levels of violence and homicide.

Harm can also be economic, such as when small businesses and private citizens are extorted or forced to pay "taxes" as part of protection rackets or, more generally, through the creation or expansion of an underground, untaxed, illicit economy. Finally, organized crime produces serious social and institutional harm, in particular when it hinders advancement and development within communities and erodes the legitimacy of public institutions. It is therefore these underlying and often chronic issues and the many victims of organized crime that are the focus of protective approaches.

[13] See, for example, Juan Carlos Garzón and John Bailey, "Displacement effects of supply-reduction policies in Latin America: a tipping point in cocaine trafficking, 2006–2008", in *The Handbook of Drugs and Society*, Henry H. Brownstein, ed. (West Sussex, United Kingdom, John Wiley and Sons, 2016), pp. 482–504.

It is important that objectives be based on need assessments, including in relation to vulnerable situations such as the global pandemic, as well as vulnerable sectors and professions. For example, organized criminal groups may exploit victims of trafficking or other individuals in conditions of particular vulnerability (e.g., irregular migrants, persons living in poverty or suffering from severe material deprivation) such as a forced agricultural labour force during periods of harvest, while businesses such as nail salons, massage parlours and street trades also constitute high-risk sectors.

Case study 6. Victim compensation in Italy

The National Strategy for the Enhancement of Confiscated Assets of Italy enables the use of criminal assets by communities. This approach, which was the product of a law of popular initiative promoted by Libera and other non-governmental organizations, is aimed at compensating communities for the damages caused by organized criminal groups, considering communities as collective victims of organized crime. Confiscated assets, including companies and real estate, can be (re)used by national institutions and civil society actors for the public interest.

Case study 7. The emphasis in Peru on assisting victims

Assistance to victims is among the main objectives of the National Multisector Policy against Organized Crime (2019-2030) of Peru. To this effect, it highlights the role of capabilities such as citizen participation in countering organized crime and aiding persons affected by the phenomenon, including through effective judicial protection of the victims of organized crime

The type of objectives and related outcomes sought through PROTECT objectives will typically resemble variations of the following:

Objectives
(the 3 "S"s of PROTECT)

1. **Save** victims and vulnerable individuals from (further) abuse and harm.
2. **Support** and compensate victims of organized crime.
3. **Sustain** communication, raising awareness of risks.

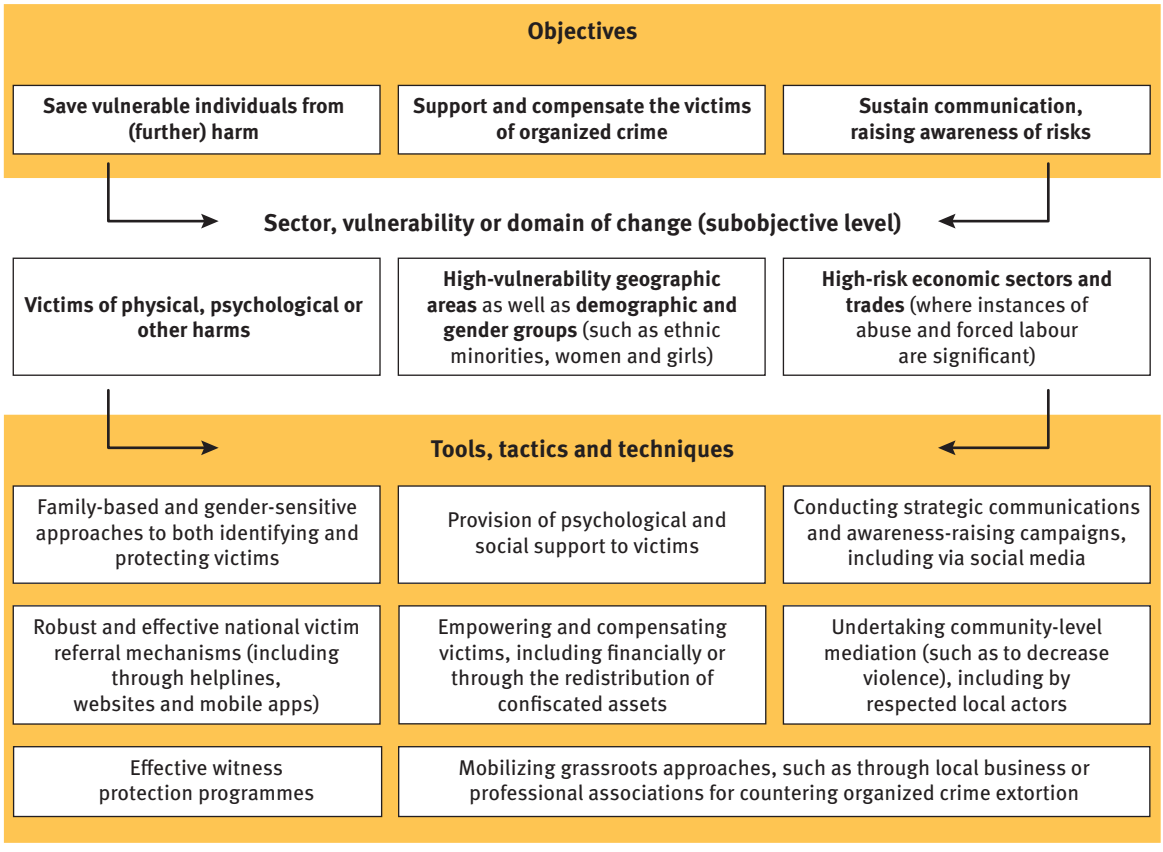
Desired outcome

Victims are removed from harm, protected from further physical, psychological or other forms of abuse and compensated, while risks to other vulnerable persons and sectors are effectively communicated.

Therefore, while most objectives contained within a strategy are about shaping and altering systemic factors that drive and enable organized crime (while always keeping in mind the effects that different tools, tactics and techniques have on different people, especially the most vulnerable), PROTECT objectives should be about individuals – in particular those that have suffered at the hands of organized crime. It is also fundamentally about the preservation of individual rights, including the right to live without the fear of becoming a victim of organized criminal groups.

Once again, the development of objectives offers a means by which to map both areas of change (subobjectives) and relevant activities and capabilities, such as in the following example.

Figure 13. Protecting victims and vulnerable individuals from organized crime: objectives, subobjectives and activities/capabilities


Objectives
Save vulnerable individuals from (further) harm
Support and compensate the victims of organized crime
Sustain communication, raising awareness of risks
Sector, vulnerability or domain of change (subobjective level)
Victims of physical, psychological or other harms
High-vulnerability geographic areas as well as demographic and gender groups (such as ethnic minorities, women and girls)
High-risk economic sectors and trades (where instances of abuse and forced labour are significant)
Tools, tactics and techniques
Family-based and gender-sensitive approaches to both identifying and protecting victims
Provision of psychological and social support to victims
Conducting strategic communications and awareness-raising campaigns, including via social media
Robust and effective national victim referral mechanisms (including through helplines, websites and mobile apps)
Empowering and compensating victims, including financially or through the redistribution of confiscated assets
Undertaking community-level mediation (such as to decrease violence), including by respected local actors
Effective witness protection programmes
Mobilizing grassroots approaches, such as through local business or professional associations for countering organized crime extortion

PROMOTE cooperation and partnerships for the achievement of the objectives

The principle of PROMOTE recognizes that every strategy to counter organized crime, regardless of the context, will need to reflect the complex and multifaceted nature of the problem. Fundamentally, this requires encouraging cooperation and partnerships from across all sectors in what amounts to a whole of society approach.

The mobilization of actors ranging across civil society, the private sector (including technology companies, transport operators and financial institutions), the media, academia and many more may require innovative approaches and instruments such as dedicated funding mechanisms, grants and incentivization schemes.

Furthermore, the transnational character of organized crime means that it cannot be effectively countered without international collaboration across all sectors – from the coordination of operations all the way through to joint training and the sharing of best practice and lessons learned. In this context, the Organized Crime Convention offers a solid legal basis as all parties can rely on the Convention for cooperation in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of organized crime-related offences. As already seen, the Convention has helped to establish a common understanding of criminalization approaches and facilitated a broad set of mechanisms for international cooperation in criminal matters, including mutual legal assistance, extradition and other forms of judicial and law enforcement cooperation. Indeed, the past two decades have seen increased cooperation among countries to tackle the threat posed by transnational organized crime, including improved sharing of technology and information among relevant criminal justice actors.

Broadly speaking, promoting cooperation and a whole-of-society approach to countering organized crime is a cross-cutting principle that can and should be applied within the context of the PREVENT, PURSUE and PROTECT principles. It is also one that is equally relevant and important at the local, national and international levels.

Those levels, and associated tools and activities, are reflected in the objectives and subsequent example below (which can once again be tailored to most contexts).

Objectives

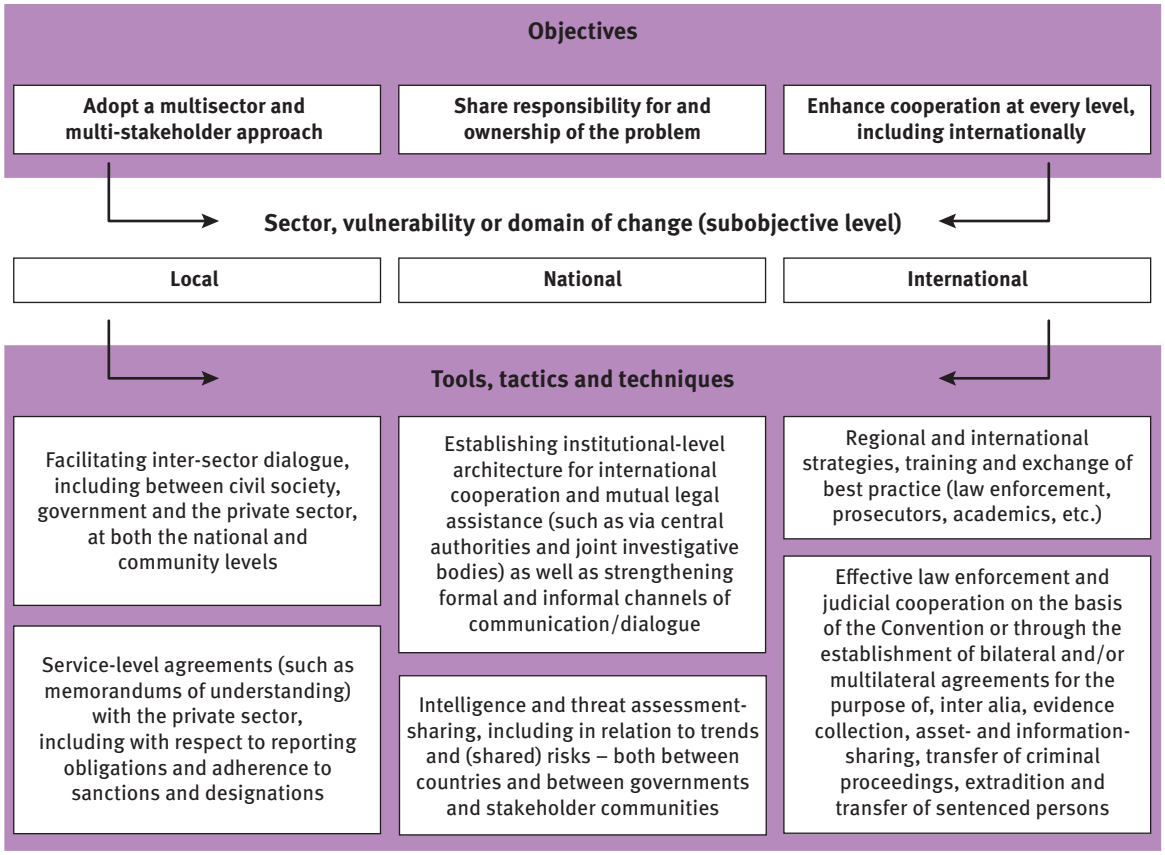
1. Adopt a multisector and multi-stakeholder approach.
2. Share responsibility for and ownership of the problem.
3. Enhance cooperation at every level, including internationally.

Desired outcome

Effective collaboration between different sectors taking place at the local, national and international levels adding up to a whole-of-society approach to countering organized crime.

These can once again be translated into further domains of change and activities as follows:

Figure 14. Promoting cooperation and partnerships against organized crime: objectives, subobjectives and activities/capabilities


Objectives
Adopt a multisector and multi-stakeholder approach
Share responsibility for and ownership of the problem
Enhance cooperation at every level, including internationally
Sector, vulnerability or domain of change (subobjective level)
Local
National
International
Tools, tactics and techniques
Facilitating inter-sector dialogue, including between civil society, government and the private sector, at both the national and community levels
Establishing institutional-level architecture for international cooperation and mutual legal assistance (such as via central authorities and joint investigative bodies) as well as strengthening formal and informal channels of communication/dialogue
Regional and international strategies, training and exchange of best practice (law enforcement, prosecutors, academics, etc.)
Service-level agreements (such as memorandums of understanding) with the private sector, including with respect to reporting obligations and adherence to sanctions and designations
Intelligence and threat assessment-sharing, including in relation to trends and (shared) risks – both between countries and between governments and stakeholder communities
Effective law enforcement and judicial cooperation on the basis of the Convention or through the establishment of bilateral and/or multilateral agreements for the purpose of, inter alia, evidence collection, asset- and information-sharing, transfer of criminal proceedings, extradition and transfer of sentenced persons

Case study 8. Multidisciplinary Intervention Team approach in the Netherlands

The dynamic character of criminal networks operating in the Netherlands led the relevant authorities to adopt new approaches to prevent and combat organized crime. As part of these efforts, the Netherlands announced the creation of a Multidisciplinary Intervention Team. This team is expected to have more than 400 specialists on board, working in relevant national entities involved in countering crime. The Team will consist of officials from the police, public prosecution service, tax authorities, the fiscal intelligence and investigation service, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (responsible, inter alia, for the protection of external borders), custom authorities and other bodies of the Ministry of Defence. Thereby, intelligence pictures and tactical and operational information can be shared more swiftly and a concerted action of all involved authorities and bodies can take place using in a combined way their legal competences to the benefit of common objectives. The main focus of the Multidisciplinary Intervention Team is to expose and disrupt criminal networks, their business processes and help seize criminal assets and for that purpose it cooperates with both public and private stakeholders, including the detection of vulnerabilities within legal economic structures.

Case study 9. International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and international cooperation

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) plays an important role in international law enforcement cooperation, thereby supporting national and international criminal investigations. It connects law enforcement agencies from its 194 member countries through its I-24/7 secure communication network. In addition to providing access to INTERPOL databases, the I-24/7 communication system offers additional value in particular for time-sensitive and serious cases, such as stop-payment requests for fraudulent cross-border transactions. By having the ability to communicate almost instantly with law enforcement agencies on the other side of the world, countries are able to react quickly and alert their national counterparts, and subsequently intercept and retrieve illicit financial flows.

A recent initiative of INTERPOL is its secure collaborative platform for cooperation. Through that collaborative platform, different sectors and stakeholders (such as law enforcement, the private sector, academia and civil society) can gather to exchange best practices, share knowledge and strengthen the international network for collaboration.

7. Delivery and implementation

However important strategies and capabilities may be for preventing and combating organized crime, they are unlikely to achieve high levels of impact without effective accompanying organizational-level delivery systems and structures. These are the means through which strategies are implemented and measured within national structures.

In most contexts – and building on the different sections of this Toolkit – this will likely and ideally require the following components (which may also be clarified within an implementation section of the strategy):

- *Strategic analysis unit.* An all-source and, wherever possible, multi-agency strategic analysis unit or similar construct. Given the multidimensional nature of organized crime, the unit should ideally be located outside the operational structures, such as law enforcement agencies, and have the ability to draw on a wide range of expertise (including the expertise found in academia, civil society and the private sector).[14] Products and assessments provided by the strategic analysis unit should in turn form the basis for integrated planning.
- *Policy and planning unit.* An integrated central policy and planning unit responsible for both drafting the national strategy and overseeing its implementation, working closely with all relevant stakeholders.[15] Clear political ownership of this policy and planning function through accountability to the relevant executive branches (for example, president, prime-minister or senior minister) should be ensured. In addition, this centrally staffed organizational unit would be best placed to report on overall progress and impact (working closely with the strategic analysis unit) and to develop communications products.[16] The entity should have a clear authority and mandate (clarified in the organized crime strategy and through links to the executive branch).

Coordination and delivery are likely to require three levels of structures:

- *Political-level board or council.* The board or council has the purpose of providing overall direction, unblocking political-level issues and monitoring overall strategic progress.
- *Strategy steering group.* A senior (albeit most likely official-level) strategy steering group or sub-board accountable to the political board and aimed at driving cross-sectoral implementation.[17]

[14] The analysis unit should ideally be placed alongside the integrated policy and planning unit (described below).

[15] Consultation and buy-in from both relevant stakeholders and political leaders are critical to the subsequent implementation of the strategy. Public announcements may also be useful as a means of ensuring further buy-in, while in some contexts the strategy may need legal endorsement.

[16] In some contexts, this might also require regular updates to the legislative branch such as through committee reports or hearings.

[17] This will in most cases be chaired and organized by the policy and planning unit, who may also act as the senior responsible unit for delivery.

- *Working-level boards.* Such working-level boards and/or coordination structures are aimed at sequencing and delivering specific components of the strategy such as law enforcement operational activities or supervising multi-stakeholder campaigns (see text box). In some contexts (such as within federal systems), these may also constitute local-level or regional delivery and reporting mechanisms. They also provide a mechanism for including external actors, such as the private sector or civil society, within implementation structures.

Campaigns consist of targeted efforts involving a wide range of stakeholders and partners focused on specific problems ranging from geographical hotspots of organized crime to vulnerable sectors such as professional money-laundering service providers. These offer a vehicle through which to conduct highly focused activities in a manner that allows impact monitoring over specific timescales. When accompanied by a communications strategy, they can also send a strong message of reassurance to the public and act as a statement of intent to organized criminal groups.

Figure 15. Implementation and delivery structures

Political direction and accountability
Reporting to
Strategic analysis unit drawing on all-source reporting
Central strategy, policy and planning unit overseeing strategy development and delivery
Strategy board/steering group (cross-sectoral implementation)
Reporting to
Working-level implementation and coordination boards/groups (law enforcement, public-private partnerships, local community initiatives)
Campaign-specific coordination structures (e.g., in relation to specific threats or geographic hotspots)

Note: Effective coordination mechanisms play a key role in translating strategies into practice.

Case study 10. Strategy formulation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Within the framework of the preparation of the Strategy to Fight Organized Crime for the period 2017-2020 of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the national Council of Ministers adopted a decision on the establishment of a working group composed of 14 members from 14 relevant national institutions. The working group was tasked with the development of both a national threat assessment and a national strategy. This allowed Bosnia and Herzegovina to assess the existing national organized crime threats and their impacts on society and to adopt appropriate measures to prevent and combat the phenomenon.

Case study 11. Implementation structures in the United States of America

In order to address institutional resistance, the United States of America adopted a consultative approach that uses top-level discussion structures to enable and drive the implementation of binding decisions and improve the allocation and management of resources and logistics.

Case study 12. Adoption process in Romania

In the light of the increased challenges and new emerging trends of organized crime, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 Romania created a working group charged with drafting the national strategy against organized crime for the upcoming period 2021–2024. The adoption process of Romania provides an interesting example of multisector engagement and public transparency. In fact, the draft strategy was submitted for public debate, enabling civil society and the private sector to get involved by sending written observations, comments and requests via public debate meetings.

8. Monitoring and evaluating impact

No strategy would be complete without a component for monitoring and evaluation in the strategy-making process. This is critical to establishing the extent to which success has been achieved, including by delivering different objectives.

Evaluating the effect of organized crime strategies is notoriously complicated. For example, metrics such as seizures, arrests and prosecutions may demonstrate the increased effectiveness of PURSUE activities. Alternatively, they may simply be a reflection of the greater quantities of illicit goods or levels of criminal activity. Moreover, an absence of any evidence of organized crime activity is not necessarily to be taken as evidence that there is an absence of such activity, as organized criminal groups may be becoming more effective at disguising their activities or benefit from increased protection (including political protection).[18]

Nevertheless, combining the use of qualitative and quantitative indicators for multiple domains may still point to strategic trends, gains or losses, thus giving a sense of overall direction and impact. Critically, the task of assessing strategic progress and impact must be robust but at the same time constitute a relatively simple and implementable process. Indeed, overly burdensome approaches and reporting obligations are often unpopular with – and therefore unlikely to be adopted by – busy policy officials, operational officers and the wider community of stakeholders, especially when these require new capabilities and/or resources.

This Toolkit therefore recommends developing a user-friendly reporting and results framework where metrics and indicators are mapped onto the different components of the strategy (see below).[19] Together, these should be able to provide an overall picture of both the range of efforts undertaken and the impact of those efforts. Accordingly, these metrics and indicators can be set at three levels:

- *Outcome-level indicators* – assessing the extent to which the strategy has delivered against high-level (and therefore "strategic") objectives
- *Output-level indicators* – evaluating the extent to which the strategy has delivered clearly identifiable tactical results[20]
- *Input-level indicators* – gauging the amount and scale of resources expended (staff and money) and/or activities conducted (such as law enforcement operations or community outreach efforts)

[18] Such nuances may also need to be reflected in public messaging on counter-organized crime campaigns.
[19] It is important to note here that indicators, just like objectives, should seek to adhere to the SMART principle.
[20] The main utility of these indicators is at an organizational level (such as within law enforcement agencies) and should therefore not be used on their own.

Developing a strategy results framework (indicative examples of metrics and indicators)

Assessment	*Qualitative judgement of overall impact during a defined period (typically 12 months) based on the following indicators:*			
Strategic principles (domain within which the impact is measured)	**PREVENT** *Measuring the extent to which the strategy has prevented organized crime from (re)infiltrating communities, the economy and political institutions*	**PURSUE** *Measuring the extent to which organized criminal groups have been disrupted, degraded and deterred*	**PROTECT** *Measuring the extent to which vulnerable persons have been protected from the harms inflicted by organized crime*	**PROMOTE** *Measuring the extent to which all relevant stakeholders have been mobilized and contributed to the strategic response*
Outcome-level indicators	• Perceptions of the presence of organized crime in vulnerable localities and of the efficacy of prevention campaigns, based on survey and focus group-based reporting • Environmental indicators and indices including homicide rates, economic data, crime statistics and corruption reports • Number of at-risk youths diverted from recruitment into organized criminal groups (e.g., identified and engaged by civil society or community actors) • Recidivism rates after release from incarceration	• Number of organized criminal groups dismantled or disrupted to the point of no longer being able to operate (measured primarily through intelligence reporting) • Total value of organized crime revenue or assets seized or confiscated • Total (estimated) revenue earned by organized criminal groups over the reporting period	• Number of individuals protected or removed from harm, including through physical protection • Number of victims compensated, including through the redistribution of confiscated assets • Number of victims provided with formal assistance • Perceptions of risk to the individual within vulnerable communities or vulnerable population segments	• Perception amongst key segments of society (including local communities and the private sector) that they form part of the response to organized crime (e.g., through surveys and questionnaires) • Quantifiable increase in regional/international cooperation, including as a result of new strategic partnerships and information exchange

Output-level indicators	• Number or availability of evidence-based awareness-raising products or campaigns disseminated and/or delivered (including via strategic communications efforts, social media campaigns and other formats and platforms) • Number of modules and education content rolled out within schools, higher education and the private sector • Number and availability of psychosocial and rehabilitation programmes delivered within prisons	• Anti-organized crime and anti-corruption laws in compliance with international law adopted, including proceeds of crime legislation • Number of successful seizures (commodity and cash) and prosecutions (including leaders/members of organized criminal groups, professional enablers and intermediaries, and corrupt officials) • Number of criminal assets confiscated and/or recovered (both domestically and through international cooperation)	• Number of referrals through, and availability of, different mechanisms (including helplines, websites and mobile apps) • Adoption of legislation or availability of guidance for protecting victims • Extent to which legislation contains human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive provisions • Number of evidence-based risk-awareness campaigns delivered and/or potential vulnerable individuals contacted	• *Availability of specific legislative provisions allowing for international cooperation, including via the Convention • Number of personnel upskilled as a result of training courses • Number of, and feedback relating to, intersectoral (e.g., government and private sector) discussions and community dialogues • Number of successful extraditions • Number of completed mutual legal assistance requests made and the time taken to respond to these requests
Input-level indicators	• Improvement of local basic services and revenue processes (e.g., tax collection) • Amount of resources (human and financial) invested in development aid and technical assistance • Number of local civil society organizations supported with a view to building resilience networks • Number of studies and analyses on preventative approaches commissioned (e.g., across government and academia)	• Law enforcement resources allocated to countering organized crime (personnel, budgets, capabilities) • Number of investigations and operations conducted, and suspicious transaction reports processed • Frequency and availability of special investigative techniques, including (electronic surveillance, undercover operations, controlled deliveries and communications interception)	• Amount of compensation allocated to victims of organized crime • Establishment of new structures and capabilities, including referral mechanisms • Number of targeted evidence-based multisector campaigns (e.g., in high-risk areas or against specific threats) conducted • Launching of grass-roots initiatives such as associations for local business in high-risk areas	• Number and scale of diplomatic initiatives aimed at improving cooperation against organized crime (e.g., international forums) • Establishment of inter-agency or cross-departmental task forces • Number of cross-border investigations (including joint investigations) • Number of extradition requests processed and contributions made to INTERPOL databases

Annex. Strategy development checklist

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER WITH THE HELP OF A STRATEGY CHECKLIST

	Steps	Checklist	Components
1	Conduct analysis of problem	✓	• Structural drivers • Markets, sectors and enablers • Organized criminal groups
2	Define overall logic (desired ends) and associated outcomes	✓	• Formulation of high-level principles (e.g., prevention, pursuit of organized criminal groups, protection of victims and promotion of integrated response)
3	Develop supporting objectives, working with relevant stakeholders	✓	• Application of SMART principle • Testing and challenging assumptions • Mutually reinforcing and systematic • Delivery partners
4	Determine tactics, tools and techniques required to deliver objectives	✓	• Realistic application of resources • Use of innovative approaches (e.g., technology) • Consider possible risks
5	Establish implementation and delivery mechanisms	✓	• Political accountability • Cross-sector coordination structures • Monitoring and reporting mechanisms
6	Develop monitoring and evaluation (results) framework	✓	• Political accountability • Cross-sector coordination structures • Monitoring and reporting mechanisms

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